

Πᾶς οἶκος Ἰσραήλ: Ezekiel and the Politics of Resurrection in Tenth-Century Byzantium

ANTHONY CUTLER

In attempts to identify the political content of Byzantine literature and art, one of the tests most commonly applied is the meaning that the work in question had for its contemporaries and its relation to events of its own time. Most often such acts of recognition depend upon the discovery of analogies that tacitly parallel a specific situation,¹ or the presence of historical figures or motifs introduced into a “timeless” context and conspicuous by their very anomalousness.² Where such approaches are appropriately applied, they lend significance and a measure of “reality” to the manifestations of a society that all too often seems to have disdained particulars; where such interpretations can go awry is in investing these products with a topicality that they do not in themselves possess.³ All in all, most such ventures have been profitable, if only because they have undone the notion that Byzantine civilization represented a millennial stasis which produced works of art and literature that were, in the main, gratuitous “religious” or aesthetic gestures unrelated to changing human preoccupations, needs, or beliefs. Byzan-

tium, we now understand, was a political society and many of its cultural expressions embodied latent contestations.

Less attention, however, has been paid to those literary or artistic statements in which a biblical or other distant event is depicted not only as a direct allusion to a current concern but as a demonstration of ancient values, formulated long before the work’s creation but still held to be relevant to that time. Such works allow us insight into what might be called the living body of Byzantine political thought—in other words, the creative recruitment of an older ideology for the purposes of the present. Where both the antiquity *and* the currency of such a principle can be demonstrated not only is the risk of an *ex post facto* imposition of anachronistic interpretation minimized, but the very continuity that the Byzantines persuaded themselves they embodied is given due recognition. In a sense all Orthodox (and other) Christian thought epitomizes this illusion of continuity, but in the case of a conventional image of the Crucifixion or the Dormition we have scant opportunity to assess whether it had special significance for its own time. On the other hand, there exist creations in the visual arts (as in literature) which, by virtue of their adoption and adaptation of old ideas, demand to be read as purposeful and therefore meaningful statements addressed to their own day. The immediate application of such instances requires recognition, but this cannot be achieved independently of the tradition from which they emerged and without which they are hardly comprehensible. The process of sedimentation—the accumulation of layers of meaning the very weight of which served to convert the original stratum of significance—is more obvious between the ninth and the eleventh century than in the following era, which is characterized by some radical innova-

¹A. Kazhdan’s recent papers demonstrate this approach: see, e.g., “‘Constantin imaginaire’: Byzantine Legends of the Ninth Century about Constantine the Great,” *Byzantion* 57 (1987), 196–250. An analogous tack has been taken by A. Cutler and N. Oikonomides, “An Imperial Byzantine Casket and Its Fate at a Humanist’s Hands,” *ArtB* 70 (1988), 77–87. Cf. I. Kalavrezou, “A New Type of Icon: Ivories and Steatites,” in *Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus and His Age. 2nd International Byzantine Conference, Delphi, 22–26 July 1987* (Athens, 1989), 377–96. I have responded to this latter paper in “Theory and Theōria: The Ivories of the Forty Martyrs as Models of Historical Understanding,” to appear in *The Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia*, ed. M. Mullett (Belfast, 1992).

²D. Mouriki, *The Mosaics of Nea Moni on Chios*, 2 vols. (Athens, 1985), 137–38; cf. A. Cutler in *BZ* 81 (1988), 86. Further on this course, see H. Maguire, this volume.

³R. Cormack, “Patronage and New Programs of Byzantine Iconography,” *The 17th International Byzantine Congress, Major Papers* (New York, 1986), 620–21.

tions:⁴ ores from some of the lowest and oldest strata were mined in the Macedonian period. I shall try to demonstrate this by uncovering such layers and, in so doing, expose the complexities of thought that went into the creation of a single artifact, the tenth-century ivory plaque of the Vision of Ezekiel now in the British Museum (Fig. 1).⁵ It is by no means the only example of such "sedimentation," but it is one of the most revealing.

The Ezekiel ivory, ostensibly devoid of any political content, is the product of a period in which ivory was frequently used to depict rulers in the company of, and often crowned by, Christ or the Virgin.⁶ The very act of association with a sacred personage is of course a political gesture, but many rulers, from the Assyrians to Renaissance princes, employed such imagery; it therefore represents nothing peculiar about the medieval Greek world. Again, the deliberate interpenetration of secular and celestial calendars and rituals⁷ and the role of the ruler as mediator between humanity and heaven—both conceptions dear to the Byzantines—are found in societies as diverse as those of T'ang China and the Aztec empire. Even the elaboration and exploitation of scriptural and classical analogies, so widespread an enterprise in Byzantium, is a familiar feature of Carolingian and later Western statecraft. It follows that any useful definition of *Byzantine* political art must arise from circumstances specific to this culture and be grounded in ideological strategies that can be

shown to be peculiar to it. To do this requires bringing to bear on the image something approximating the mental equipment that an educated Greek of the tenth century would have ready as he or she confronted such objects—learning that was apparently more literary than visual. I doubt, however, that these modes of experience were considered any more antithetical by their original beholders than the Judeo-Christian and Hellenistic strands that intertwine beneath the surface of our ivory and give rise to its tangled and, in Byzantine terms, essentially political texture.

At first glance the work seems straightforward. Is its content not defined by the legend at top left (Fig. 2), at once inscription and description: "Then Christ through the Prophet resurrected the bones"?⁸ Yet, if we suppose that this text is sufficient explanation for the occurrence of Christ—a regressive strategy, for we would still have to explain his presence in the text—it certainly does not account for the Lord's ambiguous position and attributes, his mandorla, or the angels above it. It makes no mention of the buildings behind Ezekiel (Fig. 3); it does not elucidate his striking physical resemblance to Christ (Fig. 4), why the "bones" are represented in the flesh as a triad of childlike beings (Fig. 5), or why both the main figures appear to turn their backs on these creatures in whose resurrection, according to the legend, Christ and the prophet are instrumental.

As often on ivories of this period, the inscription is a summary of, rather than a quotation from, the biblical passage that it purports to depict—Ezekiel's vision, "in the midst of the valley, which was full of bones," of the Lord who commands him to prophesy to the bones, who breathes life into them, and who opens their graves and brings them "into the land of Israel . . . your own land" (Ezek. 37:1–14). Undoubtedly it is this emphasis on the Promised Land, most clearly apparent in the last verse, that underlies early Jewish interpretation of the passage as a prophecy of Israel's general resurrection and return from captivity.⁹ Yet, curiously, despite earlier readings of the fresco in the

⁴For these transformations, see A. Kazhdan and A. Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley, 1985), and C. Walter, *Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church* (London, 1982).

⁵A. Goldschmidt and K. Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X–XII. Jahrhunderts*, II (Berlin, 1934), no. 16. I am most grateful to David Buckton of the Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities for repeatedly allowing me the opportunity to study this and other ivories in his charge. For a previous attempt to interpret the Ezekiel plaque, see the literature cited in Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, to be supplemented by R. Loverance, *Byzantium* (London-Cambridge, Mass., 1988), 48, fig. 58.

⁶The most notable examples are the "scepter tip" of Leo (VI) (A. Arnulf in *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 32 [1990], 70–84), the Constantine (VII) fragment in Moscow (I. Mišakova, "Rel'ef 'koronovanie Konstantina' v GMII; vizantijskaja reznaja kost' 'gruppy Imperatora Romana,'" in *Iskusstvo zapadnoj Evropy i Vizantii* [Moscow, 1978], 224–36), and the Romanos and Eudokia plaque in the Cabinet des Médailles (I. Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, "Eudokia Makrembolitissa and the Romanos Ivory," *DOP* 31 [1977], 307–25). For the 10th-century origin of the latter, see A. Cutler, "The Date and Significance of the Romanos Ivory," in *Byzantine East and Latin West: Art Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann* (forthcoming).

⁷M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge, 1986), 169 and passim.

⁸TOTE O XC ΔΗΛΑ ΤΟΥ Π (οφίτου) ΗΝΕC(τη)CEN ΤΑ OCTA.

⁹On this point there is agreement among Jewish sources such as the *Sanhedrin* and the *Midrash Rabbah*, and between them and early Christian commentators like Jerome (PL 25, cols. 340D–350A) and Polychronios (*In Ezechielem*, cap. xxxvii, in A. Mai, *Nova Patrum Bibliotheca*, VII.2 [Rome, 1854] 92 [commentary], 120–21 [text]), who report Jewish views. For a summary, see C. H. Kraeling, *The Excavations at Dura Europos*, VII.1, *The Synagogue* (New Haven, 1956), 179 note 689.

synagogue at Dura Europos (Fig. 6a) as representing the “revival of the Jewish State” and “the Destruction and Restoration of National Life,”¹⁰ there is no hint, beyond the large number of Israelites involved, of such promises in this oldest known representation of Ezek. 37. It has recently and rightly been pointed out that the building shown upside down at Dura is not the allegorical “house of Israel” alluded to in Scripture (verse 11) but a conventional version of a walled, Greco-Roman city upset by the earthquake (the “noise” and the “shaking” of verse 7) at the time that Ezekiel beheld the bones come together.¹¹ This detail at Dura, then, is a fairly literal account of the text. It suggests that in the third century of our era artists were hardly concerned with an overtly eschatological interpretation of the biblical passage.¹²

This reticence stands in marked contrast to Christian commentary of both the second and third centuries on the miracle of the Dry Bones. Arguing that prophecy will be vindicated, Justin Martyr, for example, points out that the prediction that Christ would come as “a dishonored and suffering man” has already been fulfilled and that therefore Christ’s second advent, “when, according, to prophecy, He shall come from heaven with glory, accompanied by His angelic host, when also He shall raise the bodies of all men who have lived, and shall clothe those of the worthy with immortality . . . , will surely be accomplished.”¹³ Paraphrasing and conflating Ezekiel with Isaiah (45:24), Justin declares that “Joint shall be joined to joint, and bone to bone, and flesh shall grow again; and every knee shall bow to the Lord, and every tongue shall confess Him.”¹⁴ If the complement of angels in the London ivory is, following Justin, a sign of the Parousia, less certainty must be attached to the gabled and trabeate architecture

beside them (Fig. 2). This has been described as “Grabgebäude,”¹⁵ but its degree of elaboration might justify recognition as the “rebuilt and decorated Jerusalem” in which the Orthodox, according to Justin, believe that the resurrection of the flesh will take place.¹⁶ Certainly for Tertullian, half a century later, the kingdom of heaven on earth will be realized, after the Resurrection, as the city of Jerusalem built by God and descended from heaven. Commenting on the apocalyptic description of this city (Rev. 21:2), he observes that “it is this that Ezekiel knew, that John has seen.”¹⁷ Whatever the meaning of these structures—sepulchers, or the Heavenly Jerusalem—given that it is a background element in the ivory, their form is more likely to depend on contemporary conventions of architectural representation than on early Christian speculation: interpretation should therefore be postponed until works of visual art closer in time to the date of the ivory have been considered.

Exegetical caution did not afflict Greek-speaking Christians of the fifth century. Cyril of Alexandria had no doubt that the miracle “that the blessed prophet Ezekiel beheld to good effect in a prophetic vision” was “the power of the Resurrection” (*tēs anastaseōs dynamis*);¹⁸ for good measure, the lemma attached to this reading by the author or his copyist stipulates that the epiphany was “an image of the coming general Resurrection.”¹⁹ But the direct intervention of Christ—that which sets our ivory apart from any other representation of the vision²⁰—is a theme due above all to Theodoret of

¹⁵ See note 5 above and pp. 55–56 below.

¹⁶ . . . ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ οἰκοδομηθείσῃ καὶ πλατυνθείσῃ. See Justin’s *Dialogus cum Tryphone Iudaeo*, 80.5, cited by W. Rordorf, *Sabbat et dimanche dans l’Eglise ancienne* (Neuchâtel, 1972), 25, lines 10–14.

¹⁷ “Hanc et Ezechiel novit et apostolus Ioannes vidit.” See Tertullian, *Adv. Marcionem*, III, ed. A. C. Kroymann, CCL I (1954), 24, lines 3–6, and Rordorf, *Sabbat et dimanche*, 32.

¹⁸ Cyril of Alexandria, *De Dogmatum solutione*, chap. 7, in *Sancti Patris nostri Cyrilli Archiepiscopi Alexandrini in D. Joannis Evangelium*, ed. P. E. Pusey, vol. III (Oxford, 1872), 563, lines 14–16.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 562, lines 7–8: εἰκόνα τῆς μελλούσης καθολικῆς ἀναστάσεως. For the possibility of scribal intervention, see *Clavis patrum graecorum*, no. 5231:1. I am obliged to Daniel Sheerin for both this passage and that from Theodoret considered immediately below.

²⁰ In the medieval West, a miniature in the Ripoll Bible (“Farfa” Bible [Vat. lat. 5729], fol. 209r) shows an inverted Christ descending to address Ezekiel in a vignette outside the aureole that contains the vision. Despite this and other major differences from the illustration in the Paris Gregory (Fig. 8), W. Neuss persisted in the belief that the Farfa miniature derived from some such Byzantine source. See his *Das Buch Ezechiel* (note 23 below, 224–25) and *Die katalanische Bibelillustration um die Wende des ersten Jahrhunderts und die altspanische Buchmalerei* (Bonn-Leipzig, 1922), 89 and fig. 97.

¹⁰ Kraeling, *Synagogue*, 179, 351. Cf. R. Wischnitzer, “The Conception of the Resurrection in the Ezekiel Panel of the Dura Synagogue,” *JBL* 60 (1941), 43–55.

¹¹ K. Weitzmann and H. L. Kessler, *The Frescoes of the Dura Synagogue and Christian Art* (Washington, D.C., 1990), 134–35 and figs. 177–79.

¹² As much might be said of a gold glass from Cologne and ten sarcophagi on which the Raising of the Bones is depicted (B. Brenk, *Tradition und Neuerung in der christlichen Kunst der ersten Jahrtausends: Studien zur Weltgerichtsbildes* [Vienna, 1966], 152–53). None of these provide an architectural or landscape setting for the miracle.

¹³ *Apol.* I, cap. 52, in *Die Apologien Justins des Märtyrers*, ed. G. Krüger (Tübingen, 1915), 43, lines 16–21. I owe knowledge of this passage to Elaine Pagels, and the English version to M. Dods, G. Reith, and B. P. Pratten, trans., *The Writings of Justin Martyr and Athenagoras*, The Ante-Nicene Christian Library, II (London, 1867), 51.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 43, lines 23–27; trans., 51.

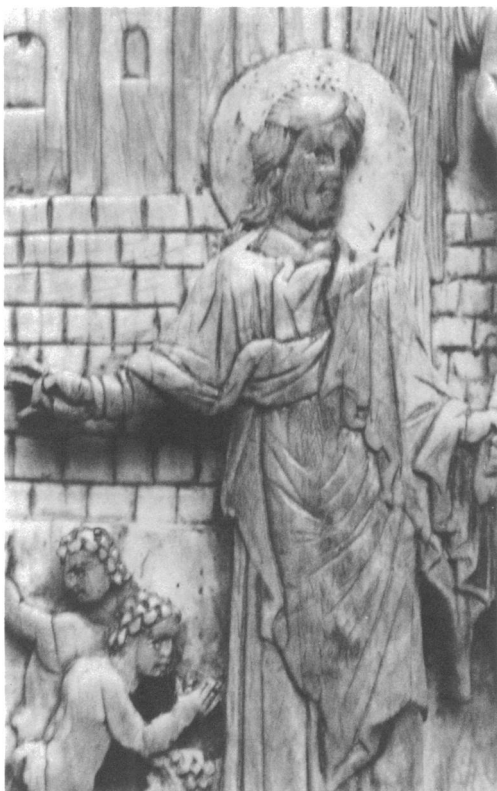




2 Detail of Fig. 1, inscription



4 Detail of Fig. 1, Christ



3 Detail of Fig. 1, Ezekiel



5 Detail of Fig. 1, the Dry Bones raised



6a–b Damascus, National Museum, synagogue fresco from Dura Europos. Ezekiel sequence, details
 (photo: courtesy of Yale University Art Gallery, Dura Europos Collection)



7 Dara, mausoleum, tomb facade (photo: courtesy of Cyril Mango)



8 Paris, B.N. gr. 510, fol. 438v, Ezekiel's vision of the Dry Bones

Kyrrhos. "He used the Prophet," Theodoret writes in his commentary on Ezek. 37:4–6,

as an assistant and, as it were, as an instrument of the Resurrection according to the vision and, by means of his tongue, he bids the bones to grow flesh and sinews and skin, and to receive the spirit of life. And these things took place as a type not only of the recall of the Jews [sc. from captivity], but also of the resurrection of all. For, says the godly Apostle, "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible" (1 Cor. 15:52).²¹

Not only is the causal role of Christ in the raising declared overtly for the first time, and Justin's insistence that the event is a figure of the resurrection of all men repeated, but the "joining of joint to joint" is attributed to the ministry of the angels responding to the command of the divine will, the *energeia* of which Ezekiel perceived in the "noise" and the "shaking" of verse 7.²²

Once again, then, the literary commentators show themselves considerably in advance of the visual representations.²³ Yet, although the figure of Christ is absent, it would appear that an end of captivity—the population of Dara returning from Persia in 591—and, more certainly, the raising of the Dry Bones are the primary subjects of a major relief (Fig. 7) on a tomb cut into the quarries west of the city.²⁴ Whether or not the much-damaged cypress and temple(?) at the right represent the misdeeds of Manasses that "brought Jewish national life to a disastrous end and ushered in the Exile,"²⁵ the scene to the left (particularly if read in Syriac fashion as following its neighbor) would provide a compensatory sequel and one especially

appropriate were national resurrection the theme of both the monument in question and the scripture that its decoration appears to invoke. Where the relief hews especially closely to the text is in its emphasis on the "four winds" (verse 9) that the Lord, through Ezekiel, commands to breathe upon the dead. These are missing from illustrations of the event in both Syriac²⁶ and Greek²⁷ manuscripts, the former roughly contemporary with, the latter several centuries later than, the tomb at Dara.

It is reasonable, perhaps, to suppose that the later a literary version or visual representation of a theme, the greater the chance that its maker will feel free to depart from the canonical form of the original. So mechanistic an assumption, however, ignores first the constraint of authority that ancient and especially biblical material exercised in Byzantium and, secondly and more seriously, the reasons that an author may have for adapting rather than simply aping an ancient monument. This complex of competing incentives is epitomized in the famous Ezekiel miniature in the Paris Gregory (Fig. 8)²⁸ which, produced in 880–883, is the version of the theme closest in time to our ivory. Much ink has been spilled in attempts to elucidate this picture and its relationship, if any, to the short text *Sēmasia eis ton Iezekiel*²⁹ that begins on the page facing the miniature—an unpromising task given that the text and image deal with different subjects. The *Sēmasia* is a meditation born of earlier commentaries on Ezekiel's vision of the four living creatures, burning like coals at the river Chebar (Ezek. 1:4–28) and the purgatorial fire with which they are equated. The miniature, on the other hand, prodigally elaborates on the Dry Bones, attributes to Ezekiel the question that in the Septuagint (37:3) God asks him, and introduces a rod-bearing angel who demonstrates to the prophet either six of the elect who "stood up upon their feet," the palace-like structure at the bottom of the picture, or both these details.³⁰

²¹ Theodoret, *In Ezechielem*, bk. 15 (PG 81, cols. 1189D–1192A). Ὑπουργὸς τῷ προφήτῃ, καὶ οἷόν τινα ὄργανον τῆς κατὰ τὴν ὁπτασίαν ἀναστάσεως κέχρηται, καὶ διὰ τῆς τούτου γλώττης τοῖς ὁστέοις παρακελεύεται, καὶ σάρκας φύσαι, καὶ νεῦρα, καὶ δέσμα, καὶ ζωτικὸν δέξασθαι πνεῦμα. Καὶ ἐγένετο ταῦτα οὐ μόνον τῆς τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἀνακλήσεως, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς ἀπάντων ἀναστάσεως τύπος. Σαλπίζει γὰρ, φησὶν ὁ θεὸς Ἀπόστολος, καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἀναστήσονται ἀφθαρτοί. This exegesis is both earlier and fuller than the scholion of Severos of Antioch that Neuss, *Das Buch Ezechiel* (note 23 below), 184, adduced in explanation of our ivory.

²² *Ibid.*, col. 1192B.

²³ These are catalogued in Brenk (note 12 above), Weitzmann and Kessler (note 11 above), J. Engemann and K. Wessel, *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, IV (1985), col. 195, and most discursively in W. Neuss, *Das Buch Ezechiel in Theologie und Kunst bis zum Ende des XII. Jahrhunderts* (Münster in Westfalen, 1912).

²⁴ M. C. Mundell, "A Sixth Century Funerary Relief at Dara in Mesopotamia," *JOB* 24 (1975), 209–27. I am grateful to Cyril Mango for permission to reproduce his photograph, used here by courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks. For a variant reading of the circumstances of the relief, see O. Nicholson, "Shall These Bones Live? A Dakhma at Dara?" *AJA* 89 (1985), 667–71.

²⁵ Kraeling (as in note 9) cited by Mundell, "Funerary Relief," 217.

²⁶ Paris, B. N. syr. 341, fol. 162r (H. Omont, "Peintures de l'Ancien Testament dans un manuscrit syriaque," *Mon Piot* 17 [1909], 95–96 and pl. vii, 10). J. Leroy, *Les manuscrits syriaques à peintures* (Paris, 1964), 207–10, assigns this book to the 6th–7th century.

²⁷ Milan, Ambros. 49–50, p. 664 (A. Grabar, *Les miniatures du Grégoire de Nazianze de l'Ambrosienne* [Paris, 1943], fig. 3).

²⁸ Paris, B. N. gr. 510, fol. 438v (H. Omont, *Miniatures des plus anciens manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque nationale du VI^e au XIV^e siècle*, 2nd ed. [Paris, 1929], 30–31, pl. LVIII).

²⁹ PG 36, cols. 665A–670A.

³⁰ This entire area of the miniature is now much abraded. It is more profitably studied in an engraving reproduced by

To explain the lack of connection between the miniature and the text it has been proposed that the picture, "almost at the end of the series of homilies . . . shows, in the symbolic manner adopted for many of the other illustrations, the final reward of those who practice the Christian virtues and who remain loyal to the true doctrine of the Church propounded by Gregory. It is an image that shows the promise of human salvation and eternal life foretold by the prophets, prefigured in the Old Testament, and fulfilled through Christ's Incarnation and Passion."³¹ This somewhat flaccid reading ignores the fact that, unlike the British Museum ivory, Christ is not represented; the architecture³² below the feet of those figures that are shown is also disregarded. Painted in the same grisaille as the elect, and therefore surely to be related to them, this building could represent either the Heavenly Jerusalem which, at the end of time, will be the site at which the flesh is resurrected³³ or the Temple. The latter interpretation is strengthened by the inscription [*Ο ἈΡΧΙΕΠΙΤΡΑΤΗΓΟΣ*], now partially destroyed,³⁴ over the head of the angle. *Strategos* is a term used in the New Testament for the officer in charge of the temple at Jerusalem:³⁵ for example, when Peter and John go there to preach "through Jesus the resurrection from the dead," they are set upon by *hoi archiereis kai ho strategos tou hierou* (Acts 4:1 ff). On the other hand, the winged being standing beside the prophet is obviously no earthly creature and no such being is mentioned in the biblical account of the Dry Bones. Rather, his rod and yellowish green himation suggest that he is the "man whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed" (Ezek. 40:3) who, in Ezekiel's final and most developed epiphany, measures the city, its gate, its

courts and chambers, and finally the temple,³⁶ concerning all of which the prophet is instructed to tell the house of Israel. However the angel and the building are interpreted, they are related to Ezekiel's response to the hand of God in the upper half of the picture, not as parallel expressions of a single source but as later accretions to the kernel of the original vision.

That at least two distinct resurrection scenes are combined in the miniature in the Homilies manuscript should prepare us for the possibilities that our ivory is not a simple act of illustration. So, too, the mature but far from aged prophet on the London plaque (Fig. 3)³⁷ is linked to the similar figure in the Paris Gregory (Fig. 8) by virtue of his difference from the elderly white-haired and white-bearded portrait of Ezekiel in book illustration³⁸ and in the domes of churches,³⁹ where he is rarely separated from his fellow-prophets. Only where he has a specific role to play, proclaimed by the inscription on a scroll that he holds,⁴⁰ does he escape from these exalted confines. The most striking of these exceptions is in the crypt at Bačkovo,⁴¹ which evidently served as an ossuary. There, over the western door in the position that the Dormition of the Virgin occupies in congregational churches, Ezekiel exhibits the Lord's affirmation that he will breathe life into the bones (Ezek. 37:5) of six fleshed but genderless bodies standing upright amid a heap of bones and skulls. The presence of the scene is sufficiently explained by its part in the

Neuss, *Buch Ezechiel*, fig. 25, and Weitzmann and Kessler, *Frescoes* (note 11 above), fig. 188.

³¹S. Der Nersessian, "The Illustrations of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianus: A Study of the Connections between Text and Images," *DOP* 16 (1962), 217.

³²This consists of a tall, flat-roofed main structure to the left of which is attached a lower, many-vaulted pavilion with a flat roof and overhanging eaves. The form approximates several buildings depicted in Paris B.N. gr. 139 (A. Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium* [Paris, 1984], figs. 245, 247).

³³See p. 49 and note 16 above.

³⁴To my knowledge this was first correctly read by Neuss, *Buch Ezechiel*, 185, followed by Omont, *Miniatures*, 30.

³⁵L. Brubaker, "The Homilies of Gregory Nazianus in Paris (B.N. gr. 510)," Ph.D. diss. (Johns Hopkins University, 1983), 337 note 596. I am grateful to Dr. Brubaker for useful discussions of the question.

³⁶Once again the process of artistic creation finds precedent in literature: the angel with the measuring reed and the resurrected dead of Ezek. 40 and the Paris Gregory miniature are anticipated by the angel who gives John a rod with instructions to measure the temple and the slain witnesses revived by the *pneuma zōēs ek tou theou* of Rev. 11.

³⁷On the significance of Ezekiel's appearance, see p. 53 below.

³⁸See note 27 above, and, for later examples, the mid-10th-century Vat. Chisianus R. VIII. 54, fol. 352v (J. Lowden, *Illuminated Prophet Books* [University Park-London, 1988], 11 and fig. 13).

³⁹E.g., at Mount Penteli in Attica, dated 1233/34 by inscription (D. Mouriki in Δελτ. Χρυσ. Ἀρχ. Ἑτ., 4th ser., 7 [1974], 86, pl. 36, 1).

⁴⁰Thus he announces his vision at the River Chebar in the mosaics of the Fethiye Camii in Constantinople (H. Belting, C. Mango, and D. Mouriki, *The Mosaics and Frescoes of St. Mary Pammakaristos (Fethiye Camii) at Istanbul* [Washington, D.C., 1978], 49, 51, figs. 46, 49) and at the Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki (A. Xyngopoulos, Ἡ ψηφιδωτὴ διακόσμηση τοῦ ναοῦ Ἀγίων Ἀποστόλων Θεσσαλονικῆς [Thessaloniki, 1953], 36, pl. 2, 2).

⁴¹E. Bakalova, *Bačkovskata kostnitsa* (Sofia, 1977), 45–48, figs. 9–11. Bakalova assigns these frescoes to the third quarter of the 12th century. Cf. S. Grishin, "Literary Evidence for the Dating of the Bačkovo Ossuary Frescoes," in *Byzantine Papers*, ed. E. and M. Jeffreys and A. Moffatt (Canberra, 1981), 94–96.

program of decoration—including the Office for the Dead on the north and south walls of the crypt and the intercessory theme of the Deesis in the apse—and the relation of the whole scheme to the space that contains it.

Yet there is no reason to suppose a specifically funerary or commemorative role for the London ivory. Indeed, the iconographical range of the pieces most closely linked⁴² with the British Museum plaque suggests that they should not be restricted to so narrow a conception. The reasons for the choice of the Ezekiel theme, and the variations played upon it, must be sought elsewhere. Nonetheless, we know so little about the use of ivories (as against icons in other materials)⁴³ from textual sources that the question of its meaning can be answered only on the basis of internal evidence. On this point, first of all, the nature of the inscription (Fig. 2)⁴⁴ is telling. Where the remark given to Ezekiel by the designer of the Paris Homilies miniature (Fig. 8) is interrogatory and predictive, the words incised into the ivory are affirmatory and retrospective: Christ *has* raised the bones through the agency of the prophet. The text is more potent precisely because it is neither a “title” for the image nor a biblical quotation but an authoritative voice that utters the essential significance of the scene.⁴⁵ In contrast to the osteophile emphasis of every earlier representation of the scene, almost no bones and certainly no skulls are in evidence. Instead, three wriggling childlike figures⁴⁶ appear to be conjured from their sarcophagus, like snakes from a basket, by the prophet’s commanding gesture (Fig. 5).

No less remarkable is the physical similarity of

the prophet (Fig. 3) and the Lord (Fig. 4). Save for the prophet’s scroll that Ezekiel holds, and Christ’s nimbus cruciger and footstool,⁴⁷ the degree to which these figures from the Old and New Testament resemble each other is so pronounced as to be beyond the realm of accident. They are clad and shod identically and have the same hairstyle; each is slightly turned to his left in a position that emphasizes the gesture made with the raised right arm. Taken in conjunction with the inscription, this likeness collapses the distinction between simile and metaphor and presents the raising as a miracle of Christ.

The recognition of such resemblances was a favorite trope of patristic thinking. Justin Martyr, for instance, observed that Ezekiel displays “the type of Christ in many ways.”⁴⁸ He compared Ezekiel’s experience by the river Chebar, said to have occurred in the prophet’s thirtieth year (Ezek. 1:1), with Christ whom Luke (3:23) reported to have been “about thirty years of age” at the time of his baptism. Like the Lord who descended into “the place of captivity” to free men from their bondage, Ezekiel also entered into captivity.⁴⁹ More broadly, Severianos of Gabala argued that the *nomothetēs* of the Old and the New Testament were one and the same, given that the Gospel did not start with the Incarnation but shines already through the prophets.⁵⁰ It is therefore perhaps scarcely surprising to find expressions of the resemblance between Christ and Ezekiel in early Christian art. On the ten sarcophagi that depict the raising of the Dry Bones,⁵¹ the beardless prophet is represented in identical manner to the Lord who heals the Blind Man, raises Lazarus, and performs *inter alia* the miracle at Cana.

Of Byzantine representations of the four major prophets, Ezekiel is the least firmly defined type. His curly head in a mosaic at Mount Sinai⁵² and on an ivory casket at Stuttgart⁵³ clearly differentiates

⁴²On both technical and stylistic grounds the best comparanda are a fragment of a Nativity formerly in Lucerne (H. Schnitzler et al., “Mittelalterliche Kunst der Sammlung Kofler-Truniger, Luzern,” *Aachener Kunstblätter* 31 [1965], 87, no. S6), and the Deesis in Berlin, Goldschmidt-Weitzmann, *Elfenbeinskulpturen* (note 5 above), no. 7.

⁴³The parameters of the situation within which 10th century ivories are to be understood are set out in my study, *The Hand of the Master* (in press).

⁴⁴See note 8 above.

⁴⁵I borrow the notion of inscription as a voice, including the voice of God, from M. Camille, “Seeing and Reading: Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy,” *Art History* 8 (1985), 26–49.

⁴⁶The recognition that these diminutive figures are children seems more apt than the usual description of such forms as “putti.” For the view of children as *eikōnes*, and the idea that, in contrast to the strange new Christian notion of the resurrection of the body, the real regeneration is through natural offspring, see the *Vie de S. Thekla*, ed. G. Dagron, SubsHag 62 (Brussels, 1978), 5, lines 37–38.

⁴⁷This heavy, almost Biedermeier, object decorated with floral sprays around its arcades and feet ending in balls, recurs on the Deesis ivory in Berlin (note 42 above).

⁴⁸PG 13, col. 768D.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, col. 769B.

⁵⁰PG 56, col. 397. The authorship of this homily, called *de legislatore*, has at times been doubted. It was attributed to Chrysostom by Photios, *Bibliothēkē*, ed. R. Henry, vol. VIII (Paris 1977), cod. 277, 143, lines 5–6, but restored to Severianos by S. J. Voicu, *DSp*, XV (Paris, 1989), col. 755.

⁵¹Brenk (note 12 above), figs. 5–55.

⁵²G. H. Forsyth and K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai* (Ann Arbor, n.d. [1973]), pl. CLXIIIa.

⁵³Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Elfenbeinskulpturen* (note 5 above), II, no. 24, pl. viic.

him from the image on the British Museum plaque (Fig. 3) where, as pointed out, he shares the long wavy hair of Christ. On this ivory, he is a younger, more robust figure than the patriarch with “barba e capelli grigi biondi” that once figured in a mosaic on the north tympanum of Hagia Sophia, Constantinople, if Fossati’s watercolor and words are to be trusted (and they usually are).⁵⁴ The ninth-century *Sacra Parallela* manuscript in Paris depicts him in three different guises in which his beard may be pointed or round and his hair light or dark.⁵⁵ Just so, his likenesses vary in two Constantinopolitan mosaics of the first quarter of the fourteenth century.⁵⁶ That there was considerable variation in representations of Ezekiel is not at issue: other prophets, too, enjoyed no established type.⁵⁷ The problem rather is why in the tenth century, and in the Dry Bones ivory in particular, he should have been approximated to Christ both physically and topographically.

Part of the answer lies in the identity of those whom Ezekiel or, as the inscription (Fig. 2) has it, Christ through him, raises. In no vision in the Old Testament does the Lord, speaking through his prophet, more often identify the beneficiaries of the theophany. “These bones are the whole house of Israel” (37:11), he declares and, no fewer than four times in the same chapter, he describes them as *ho laos mou*. Lampe recognized at least six senses in which the word *laos* was used in early Christian literature, ranging from “a number or crowd of people,” generally, to “nation,” “Israel as [the] people of God,” the Church, the congregation, the laity, or “Christian” at more specific levels.⁵⁸ For Byzantine authors the word was likewise multivalent.⁵⁹ Yet there can be little doubt that, in reading Ezekiel, it is as the “people of God,” as the Christian “folk” or “community” (*to koinon*, *hē koinōtes*)⁶⁰

that the term *laos* was understood. A sense of ethnic and/or religious identity depends not only on the moral and confessional characteristics that a group supposes itself to possess. It may also be defined negatively by that which the group is not; in other words, by its concept of “otherness.” In this connection it is revealing to observe the currency in tenth-century Byzantine art of the term *allophyloi* (literally, “other races”) in contrast to the biblical meaning of the word. In the Septuagint (e.g., 1 Sam. 17) *allophyloi* is the normal term for those whom we call the Philistines. Accordingly, in the Paris Psalter, the troops led by Goliath are so labeled.⁶¹ But in the Joshua Roll, a saga of Israel’s triumphs in the Holy Land, and a message to its own time as much as a faithful record of biblical events, those foreign peoples whom the Septuagint (Josh. 10:5–6) distinguishes by their precise place of origin are lumped together in inscriptions as *allophyloi*.⁶² This is the more remarkable in that when small groups of enemy tribes are shown they are identified specifically (e.g., *andres [tēs] Gai, andres tōn Gabaōn*),⁶³ but when they appear in number they receive the generic indication of their otherness.

Did the understanding of the miracle of the Dry Bones change similarly? Certainly there was nothing new in the tenth-century view that their raising was a “prelude for all flesh”⁶⁴ or that this wonder had been worked by Christ. This had been already promulgated in the early Byzantine *kontakion*, “On Lazarus,” by an otherwise unknown Kyriakos as an analogy to the raising of the brother of Mary and Martha.⁶⁵ It may therefore fairly be asked whether the British Museum plaque is any more than a particular example of the doctrine that the Church gathers together as the body of Christ to

⁵⁴C. Mango, *Materials for the Study of the Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul* (Washington, D.C., 1962), 61–62 and fig. 88.

⁵⁵K. Weitzmann, *The Miniatures of the Sacra Parallela*, Paris gr. 923 (Paris, 1979), 155–57, figs. 375–83. None of these could be said to be especially close to the description of Ezekiel in “Oulpius the Roman” (M. Chatzidakis, ‘Επ. ‘Ετ.Βυζ.Σπ. [1938], 409: μακροκέφαλος, λιγνοπρόσωπος καὶ μικρὸν ἐπιμήκης τὸ γένειον ἔχων). See also Lowden, *Prophet Books* (note 38 above), 122.

⁵⁶See note 40 above.

⁵⁷Thus Habakkuk, on whom see G. Galavaris, *The Illustration of the Liturgical Homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus* (Princeton, 1962), 121–22, figs. 138, 181, 236, 357, and C. Walter, “The Iconography of the Prophet Habakkuk,” *REB* 47 (1989), 251–60.

⁵⁸Lampe, 792–93.

⁵⁹See the useful comments on this term in McCormick, *Eternal Victory* (note 7 above), 71 note 30, 155, 162, 194 note 27.

⁶⁰See, e.g., Nicholas I, Patriarch of Constantinople, *Letters*, ed. and trans. R. J. H. Jenkins and L. G. Westerink, CFHB 6 (Wash-

ington, D.C., 1973), 356, lines 13 and 19, 374, line 53. See also Nicholas of Ankyra in J. Darrouzès, *Documents inédits d’ecclésiologie byzantine* (Paris, 1966), 216, line 22 and 226, line 15, A. P. Kazhdan, *Social’nyj sostav gosподstvujuščego klassa Vizantii XI–XII vv.* (Moscow, 1974), 27, was the first to draw attention to the use of the term κοινότητος in the *De administrando Imperio* and Nicholas of Ankyra.

⁶¹Fol. 4v (Cutler, *Aristocratic Psalters* [note 32 above], fig. 248).

⁶²Vat. Palat. gr. 431, sheet XIII (K. Weitzmann, *The Joshua Roll, a Work of the Macedonian Renaissance* [Princeton, 1948], fig. 42).

⁶³*Ibid.*, figs. 31, 34.

⁶⁴... τοῦτο προοίμιον ἔδειξα πάσῃ σαρκί (in C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica* [Vienna, 1968], 83, line 3). Again I am grateful to Daniel Sheerin for this reference.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 81–85. A connection between early Byzantine hymnography and 10th-century ivories has been recognized by M. E. Frazer, “Hades Stabbed by the Cross of Christ,” *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 9 (1974), 153–61.

enter into the Kingdom as it ascends to heaven.⁶⁶ I suggest that the answer is positive. But demonstration of this point is possible only in terms of the uses that were made of the book of Ezekiel, and of his vision in the valley,⁶⁷ at and after the time that the ivory was carved. In a letter of the mid-tenth century, Alexander, the former metropolitan of Nicaea, employs the figure of the Dry Bones quite readily with reference to his continued existence after leaving office.⁶⁸ Much later, this personal application is expanded by Niketas Choniates to evoke the recall to public life under Andronikos Komnenos of those who had been mortified by governmental neglect.⁶⁹ But perhaps the most suggestive use of the passage is to be found earlier in a letter—or, rather, in the context in which it was written—of Arethas “to the emir in Damascus at the prompting of the Emperor Romanos.”⁷⁰ Allegedly in response to assaults on the Christian faith, Arethas insists that belief in Christ is justified by the truth of prophecies concerning his advent and the miracles that he worked. But in tone it is a mocking account of Muslim misrepresentations, not the least of which concern the subject of our ivory:

As to those who say that Ezekiel raised the dead, we have laughed much on account of them. For Ezekiel himself explained in his prophecy, called “of the bones,” that he was speaking not of the bones of corpses but of those who have returned from captivity in Babylon to their places of origin. It is these whom he calls the dead. He states “Son of man, these bones are the house of Israel,” for they themselves say “Our bones have become dry, we have been divided,” which is to say we are as corpses. And immediately he adds, “I shall bring you back from your tombs into your country, O my people.” How could you take a simile for an account of reality?⁷¹

⁶⁶ See A. Schmemmann, *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom* (Crestwood, N.Y., 1988). For English speakers, “valley” was canonized in the Authorized Version.

⁶⁷ Κοιλάδι, derived from the Homeric κοῖλος, is a replacement for the Septuagint’s πεδῖον. It is unknown to Lampe but is found in Kyriakos’ hymn (note 65 above).

⁶⁸ J. Darrouzès, *Epistoliers byzantins du Xe siècle* (Paris, 1960), 75, line 15. About the same time, the proemion to the *De administrando Imperio* draws on Ezek. 40:2 to suggest that the emperor has been raised by God to be “a refuge upon a hill.”

⁶⁹ *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, ed. J. L. van Dieten, CFHB 11 (Berlin, 1975), I, 362, lines 1–2.

⁷⁰ *Arethae archiepiscopi Caesariensis Scripta Minora*, ed. L. G. Westerink, vol. I (Leiden, 1968), no. 26, pp. 234–45.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 236, line 26–237, line 5. Πρὸς δὲ τοὺς λέγοντας ὅτι καὶ Ἰεζεκιὴλ ἀνέστησε νεκρούς, πολλὰ κατεγέλασαμεν τῶν ταῦτα λεγόντων. αὐτὸς γὰρ ὁ Ἰεζεκιὴλ ἐν τῇ προφητείᾳ αὐτοῦ τῇ περὶ τῶν νεκρῶν ὁσῶν λεγούσῃ ἡρμήνευσεν ὅτι οὐχὶ περὶ νεκρῶν ὁσῶν λέγει, ἀλλὰ τοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς αἰχμαλωσίας τῆς εἰς Βαβυλῶνα ἀπαχθέντας καὶ πάλιν εἰς τοὺς ἰδίους ὑποστρέψαντας τόπους, ἐκείνους λέγει νεκρούς, ἐπάγει γὰρ ὅτι

Written in 920–922, in a broad, popular style for a “broad, popular Christian public,”⁷² Arethas borrows from the theological commentaries of Origen and Theodoret (the most frequently cited in the catenae of all the exegetes of Ezekiel)⁷³ but turns them to polemical political ends. The lesson of Scripture, he suggests to his audience, lies in its allegorical interpretation. In our eyes the letter reads as a characteristic tenth-century refashioning of the image that Christian Greeks had of themselves.

It was in a catena used “in monastic circles,” Neuss supposed, that the British Museum ivory, or the miniature on which he believed it to be based, had its origin.⁷⁴ Certainly its sophisticated, Christocentric reading of the event owes more to patristic thought than to popular accounts of Ezekiel. The so-called Synaxarion of Constantinople,⁷⁵ compiled close to the time when our plaque was made, but deriving the visionary’s biography directly from the first-century *Lives of the Prophets*,⁷⁶ stresses that the miracle of the Dry Bones offered hope to Israel now and in the future. It echoes the scriptural insistence that God has chosen his people (*laos*) over other nations (*ethnoi*), but does not mention the name of Jesus Christ. Being narrative in form, however, the Synaxarion account does make reference to Ezekiel’s last and most extended vision:⁷⁷ “after the manner of Moses he saw the type of the temple [with its] broad wall, as Daniel [9:25] too declared that it would be built.”⁷⁸ Is this the complex of structures represented in the upper left quadrant of the ivory (Fig. 3)? The traditional view that these are tombs⁷⁹ is not sup-

‘οὐδὲ ἀνθρώπου, τὰ ὅσα ταῦτα οἶκος Ἰσραὴλ ἐστίν. αὐτοὶ γὰρ λέγουσι «Εἰρὰ γέγονε τὰ ὅσα ἡμῶν, διαπεφωνήκαμεν»· τοῦτέστιν ἐνεκρώθημεν. καὶ εὐθὺς ἐπάγει ‘καὶ ἀνάξω ὑμᾶς ἐκ τῶν μνημάτων ὑμῶν εἰς τὴν γῆν ὑμῶν, λαός μου’. πῶς οὖν τὸ ἐξ ὁμοιότητος λεγόμενον ὑμεῖς εἰς ἀληθὴ πρᾶξιν λογίζεσθε;

⁷² P. Karlin-Hayter, “Arethas’ Letter to the Emir at Damascus,” *Byzantion*, 29–30 (1959–60), 286. For an Islamic example of this sort of “dispute-text” in which Ezekiel’s act of resurrection is a bone of contention, see S. H. Griffith, “Bahir-Bēsēr: Boon Companion of the Byzantine Emperor Leo III; the Islamic Recension of His Story in *Leiden Oriental MS 951* (2),” *Le Muséon* 103 (1990), 293–327, esp. 323.

⁷³ G. Karo and H. Lietzmann, “Catenarum graecarum catalogus,” *NachrGött* (1902), 346–48.

⁷⁴ *Buch Ezechiel* (note 23 above), 184.

⁷⁵ *Synaxarium CP*, cols. 831–33.

⁷⁶ *The Lives of the Prophets*, ed. and trans. C. C. Torrey, *JBL Monograph Series 1* (Philadelphia, 1946), 22–24. For the date, see Torrey, 12.

⁷⁷ See p. 52 above.

⁷⁸ *Synaxarium CP*, col. 832, lines 21–24. For discussion of this text I am indebted to D. R. Jordan.

⁷⁹ Note 15 above.

ported by comparison with unmistakably sepulchral structures in nearly contemporary book illustrations and ivories. Thus, while a tomb in a cave to which a sorcerer leads Julian the Apostate in the late ninth-century Paris Gregory⁸⁰ has a pediment, it is a low, squat construction like a gabled sarcophagus. So, too, the buildings in the background of a plaque depicting the Raising of Lazarus, now in Berlin,⁸¹ are domed structures with elaborately decorated friezes. Instead, even though it has been claimed that in a Midrash on Psalm 78 Ezekiel is said to have received “the key to the tombs at the reawakening of the dead,”⁸² this exegetical (and unillustrated) tradition must bow before the resemblance of the buildings on our ivory to temple fronts as they are represented in Roman art at both the capital⁸³ and Dura Europos.⁸⁴ In the absence of any useful parallels among structures built in Byzantium, or Byzantine representations of architecture, it should seem as if at least this element in the design of our plaque, like much of the thinking that it incorporates, depends upon a late antique forebear.⁸⁵

Whether these buildings are intended to suggest the Temple rising above the city's walls or Jerusalem itself is immaterial. For Ezekiel, as for many of his commentators, the former expresses the latter

metonymically. What is important is that the architecture here suggests both the place of origin of the heavenly host responsible for the miracle and the destination of those who have been resurrected. Ambiguity also attends the position and bodily attitude of Christ (Fig. 4). Traditional concern with the “sources” of imagery has, since Neuss,⁸⁶ led to belief in the influence, or “memories,” in the ivory of an Anastasis representation. At one time it was even identified as an Anastasis.⁸⁷ Yet, as has been pointed out,⁸⁸ the rainbow and the book that Christ rests on his left thigh, not to speak of his footstool, militate against so simplistic a reading. These features, like the angels around the mandorla, could carry with them some sense of an Ascension, itself the subject of much variation even within the domain of ivory carving.⁸⁹ Yet on our plaque Christ cannot unequivocally be described as seated and the terrestrial situation of the footstool—indeed of this entire sector of the composition—offers a marked contrast to normal representations of the Ascension where, of course, Christ in his aureole, and the angels that support it appear high above the earth.⁹⁰

Except for those unswervingly concerned with the “origins” of an idea, and ipso facto blind to the sort of visual paronomasia at work in our ivory, our main interest is in the mentality that encouraged the formation of such ambiguous images from the sedimentary deposits of a thousand years of reflection on the Dry Bones. Second only to this are the varieties of significance that it could enjoy in a particular historical situation. In Constantinople, in

⁸⁰ Fol. 374r (Omont, *Miniatures* [note 28 above], pl. LIII).

⁸¹ Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Elfenbeinskulpturen* (note 5 above), no. 14. The tombs from which the dead arise in the Carolingian ivory on the cover of the Pericopes of Henry II are also gabled structures with flanking columns. On this composition and its lack of direct relation to Byzantine models, see A. Kartsonis, *Anastasis: The Making of an Image* (Princeton, 1986), 148, fig. 48.

⁸² G. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, II (Grand Rapids, 1964), 847–48. For a more accurate version of this text, without mention of tombs, see *The Midrash on Psalms*, trans. W. G. Braude, vol. II (New Haven-London, 1959), 26.

⁸³ See, e.g., the tall facades on high bases in the Marcus Aurelius reliefs now in the Palazzo dei Conservatori, Rome (R. Bianchi Bandinelli, *Rome the Centre of Power: Roman Art to AD 200* [London, 1970], fig. 351). While the rectangular apertures cut into the two left bays of the structure in the ivory could be taken for *loculi*, the right bay is clearly a paneled door as in the Conservatori reliefs.

⁸⁴ Kraeling, *Synagogue* (note 9 above), pls. LVII, LX.

⁸⁵ Some late antique representations, as in the arch mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore (C. Cecchelli, *I mosaici della Basilica di S. Maria Maggiore* [Turin, 1956], pl. xxxvi), have pediments and tiled roofs as on our ivory. Derek Krueger has kindly drawn my attention to a passage in Origen's *Commentary on John* (bk. 10, chaps. 229–36; ed. C. Blanc, SC 157 [Paris, 1970], 520.20–525.29) which supports our belief that in the context of the ivory as a whole, the buildings in the upper left corner should be read as the temple. Citing Ezek. 37 at length, Origen equates Jesus' prediction of the rebuilding of the temple with the creation of the church; both are constituted of the newly enfolded bones seen by the prophet.

⁸⁶ “Nicht unmöglich ist, dass bei dem Maler Erinnerungen an Darstellungen der Anastasis mitgewirkt haben” (as in note 23 above, 184).

⁸⁷ H. Graeven in *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* 20 (Vienna, 1899), 11.

⁸⁸ Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Elfenbeinskulpturen* (note 5 above).

⁸⁹ See *ibid.*, nos. 4, 24, 114, 115, where all or most of the features of this part of our ivory are present. But on other plaques (nos. 58, 117, 198, 222, 223) one or more of these elements of iconography (usually the rainbow) are lacking.

⁹⁰ For a composition otherwise fairly close to this sector of the plaque, see the Ascension on an epistyle beam at Mount Sinai (G. and M. Soteriou, *Εἰκόνες τῆς Μονῆς Σινᾶ* [Athens, 1958], nos. 91–94). The applicability of the “core” of the Ascension to other scenes was not lost on Byzantine artists. It constitutes the nub, for instance, of a Parousia image in the 11th-century Florence, Laur. VI, 23, fol. 34v (T. Velmans, *Le Tétraévangile de la Laurentienne* [Paris, 1971], 29, fig. 76) as it does of a 12th-century fresco at Veljusa, interpreted by P. Miljkovic-Peppek (*Veljusa: Manastir sv. Bogorodica Milostiva vo seloto Veljusa kraj Strumica* [Skopje, 1981], 178, fig. 59) as the vision of St. Niphon, bishop of Constantianae.

and after the ninth century,⁹¹ the motif was inextricably bound up with the liturgy of Holy Saturday, the context into which Ezek. 37:1–14 had been inserted in the lectionary of the Church in Jerusalem.⁹² At the same time it appears in the *Prophetologion* where it is immediately followed by a *prokeimenon* imploring Christ to ascend from Hades.⁹³ It is to be expected, therefore, that resonances of the Anastasis should be apparent in the ivory. If, as is usually supposed of icons in luxurious materials, it was made for an aristocratic patron, this could be accounted for by the imperial rite for Holy Saturday as described in the Book of Ceremonies.⁹⁴

But to confine the significance of the plaque to so restricted a milieu is to underestimate the extent to which the Dry Bones had become “national” property. Their adoption by the church of Constantinople at a climactic moment of the liturgical year could only broaden the base of familiarity with a biblical passage that had heretofore been of concern primarily to Jewish and Christian exegetes.⁹⁵ This hugely increased reception coincided with an era of military expansion against, and confessional struggle with, the Arabs—the ostensible *raison d’être* for Arethas’ letter to the emir. Contrary to what, on insufficient grounds,⁹⁶ has been claimed for the Ezekiel sequence at Dura Europos, the ninth and tenth centuries were the first time that the miracle in the valley became an emblem of national revival. The old image was revitalized as the expression of ethnic and religious conscious-

ness and a theme which till then had not been a “favorite” subject in art assumed significance for the community as a whole.⁹⁷ Where early Christians had scruples concerning the idea of a general resurrection,⁹⁸ in the Macedonian era, as the London ivory (Fig. 1) and possibly the Paris Homilies miniature (Fig. 8) make clear, the Dry Bones signified the deliverance that the Lord offered his chosen people.

This is not to argue that the theme ceased to be of interest to the erudite. Indeed, it finds a curious parallel in a classical myth that Patriarch Photios knew,⁹⁹ although in the version of the Pseudo-Apollodoros rather than its Ovidian original.¹⁰⁰ The story is that of Deukalion, the Greek Noah. On the advice of his father Prometheus, he and his wife Pyrrha survived Zeus’ flood in a *larnax* that Deukalion had constructed. Preserved in this way, they landed on Mount Parnassos after nine days and made sacrifice to Zeus. The chief of the gods bade him take up the “bones of his great mother” and throw them over his head; these bones, Deukalion learns, are stones¹⁰¹ in the body of the earth, that is, of his mother, Petra Genetrix, just as Ezekiel learns from the Lord that the bones with which he is confronted are “the whole house of Israel.” The stones that Deukalion throws take on the shape of men and those that Pyrrha casts become women. Thus, just as the dead arise from the bones behind Ezekiel’s back (Fig. 6b), so, in the reading of one historian of religion, those thrown by Deukalion and Pyrrha formed “the matrix whence a new mankind was to emerge.”¹⁰² Apollodoros prefers etymology to mysticism: “People were henceforth called [*laoi*] metaphorically, from *laas*, a stone.”

There is an obvious danger in assuming that myths such as that of Deukalion which are obscure to us were not obscure to the Byzantines. But, not only because of the patriarch’s awareness of Apol-

⁹¹ For the time by which the church of Constantinople had evolved a lectionary system, see Y. Burns, “The Greek Manuscripts Connected by the Lection System with the Palestinian Syriac Gospel Lectionary,” *Studia Biblica* 2, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, suppl. series (Sheffield, 1980), 13–28, and, more broadly, R. Taft, “A Tale of Two Cities: The Byzantine Holy Week Triduum as a Paradigm of Liturgical History,” in *Time and Community: In Honor of Thomas Julian Talley*, ed. J. N. Alexander (Washington, D.C., 1990), 21–41. On the place of Ezek. 37:1–14 in the *orthros* service of Holy Saturday, see A. Rahlfs, “Die alttestamentliche Lektionen der griechischen Kirche,” *NachrGött* (1915), 164–65, 167. Cf. J. Mateos, *Le Typicon de la Grande Eglise: Ms. Sainte-Croix no. 40, Xe siècle*. II, *Le cycle des fêtes mobiles*, OCA 166 (Rome 1963), 82.18–19.

⁹² *Le grand lectionnaire de l’Eglise de Jérusalem (Ve–VIIIe siècle)*, ed. and trans. M. Tarchinischvili, CSCO 189, *Scriptores iberici* 10 (Louvain, 1959), 112–13, no. 732.

⁹³ *Prophetologium*, I, *Monumenta musicae byzantinae. Lectionaria*, I, ed. C. Høeg and G. Zuntz (Copenhagen, 1970), 429–32. In the Triodion, a second *prokeimenon* asks the risen Christ to raise us with his hand. See *Triodion katanyktikon*, 9th ed. (Athens, n.d.), 485–86.

⁹⁴ *De ceremoniis*, Bonn ed. (1829), I, 180–86, esp. 183, lines 19–21.

⁹⁵ See note 9 above.

⁹⁶ See pp. 48–49 above.

⁹⁷ The parallel between *ὁ κοινότης* (and its various equivalents: see p. 54 and note 60 above) and the Muslim concept of the *umma*, current from the very beginnings of Islam, is obvious. On this concept, see G. E. von Grunebaum in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, II (Cambridge, 1970), 473.

⁹⁸ See Brenk, *Tradition und Neuerung* (note 12 above), 32–35.

⁹⁹ *Bibliothēkē*, ed. R. Henry, vol. III (Paris, 1962), cod. 186, 39, line 37–40, line 14. See also Photios, *Epistulae et Amphilochia*, ed. L. Westerink, vol. V (Leipzig, 1986), 192, line 15.

¹⁰⁰ *Metamorph.*, bk. 1, lines 348–415.

¹⁰¹ The stones, but not the bones, are mentioned in the version of Apollodoros, *Bibliothēkē*, I, 7, 2. Below, I have modified the translation of J. G. Frazer (ed. Loeb, [London-Cambridge, Mass., 1921], 54).

¹⁰² M. Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible* (New York, 1962), 171.

lodoros, I suspect that exactly the opposite was true. Intellectuals sought out the *recherché*, cultivated it in their literary gardens, and displayed it to astonish their auditors, correspondents, and adversaries. In his researches Photios drew little distinction between the pagan and Christian literature of antiquity. We should therefore not be surprised to find ideas from both such sources surfacing in works of the tenth century. The restoration of neglected traditions and their transmission to his successors is a motive—to cite only the most obvious example of such an attitude—explicitly adduced in Constantine VII's compilation of the Book of Ceremonies.¹⁰³ Yet, as I have tried to suggest, more than the recovery and transmission of antiquity was involved in the creation of the Ezekiel ivory. Its introduction not merely of Christ but of an *active* Christ, as the inscription (Fig. 2) attests, differentiates it from older theophanies as in Hosios David, Thessaloniki,¹⁰⁴ or the “archaic” wall paintings of Cappadocia where the prophet is only a witness. By contrast, on the British Museum plaque, his similarity to the Lord, not only in appearance but in action, suggests a synergy between them.

From a Christian point of view it is divine *energeia* that enables Ezekiel to effect the miracle, but in an anthropological perspective it is Christ who has “received” the power of prophecy from Ezekiel,

just as Joshua received his from Moses, and Jesus was “John the Baptist risen from the dead.”¹⁰⁵ The Raising of the Bones takes place in the midst of a valley (or plain)¹⁰⁶ to which the prophet is “carried out,” a wilderness away from human habitation and, as such, an appropriate site for the intersection of the natural and the supernatural.¹⁰⁷ If structuralist explication can demonstrate the role of myth as a society's collective epistemology, it is less satisfactory in dealing with the ways in which artifacts not only reflect a society but present, and indeed constitute, it.¹⁰⁸ What we may retrospectively regard as an example of the way in which a particular society represented its ideological tenets can, in another light, be seen as a means of self-definition, a product that helped to shape the image that a community had of itself. Art and literature do not always reflect a people's sense of themselves; an object like the Ezekiel ivory suggests that their sense of identity may derive from the images that they make and the stories that they tell about themselves.

The Pennsylvania State University

¹⁰³ As in note 94 above, 4, lines 14–19.

¹⁰⁴ W. F. Volbach, *Early Christian Art* (New York, n.d. [1961], fig. 134).

¹⁰⁵ Mark 6:14, 16. See E. Leach, “Why Did Moses Have a Sister?” in E. Leach and D. A. Aycock, *Structuralist Interpretations of Biblical Myth* (Cambridge, 1983), 36–37.

¹⁰⁶ Note 67 above.

¹⁰⁷ Leach (note 105 above).

¹⁰⁸ This manner of interpretation is more familiar to anthropologists. John Dixon Hunt has kindly drawn my attention to one expression of it by C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, 1973), 451.